The friends of humanity, who consider war as the greatest foe to human happiness, will deem not unworthy of perusal the following PROJECT FOR A PERPETUAL PEACE, by ROUSSEAU.

As a more noble, ufeful, and delightful Project never engaged the human mind, than that of eftablifhing a perpetual peace among the contending nations of Europe, never did a writer lay a better claim to the attention of the public than he who points out the means to carry fuch a defign into execution. It is, indeed, very difficult for a man of probity and fenfibility, not to be fired with a kind of enthufiafm on fuch a fubject: nay, I am not clear that the very illufions of an heart truly humane, whofe warmth makes every thing eafily furmountable, are not in this cafe more eligible than that rigid and forbidding prudence, which finds, in its own indifference and want of public fpirit, the chief obftacle to every thing that tends to promote the public good.

I doubt not that many of my readers will be fore-armed with incredulity, to withftand the pleafing temptation of being perfuaded; and indeed I fincerely lament their dulnefs in miftaking obftinacy for wifdom. But I flatter myfelf, that many an honeft mind will fympathife with me in that delightful emotion, with which I take up the pen to treat of a fubject fo greatly interefting to the world. I am going to take a view, at leaft in imagination, of mankind united by love and friendfhip: I am going to take a contemplated profpect of an agreeable and peaceful fociety of brethren, living in conftant harmony, directed by the fame maxims, and joint fharers of one common felicity; while, realizing to myfelf fo affecting a picture, the reprefentation of fuch imaginary happinefs will give me the momentary enjoyment of a pleafure actually prefent.

I could not refift the impulfe of devoting a few lines, at the beginning of my performance, to a fentiment with which my heart is replete. Let us now endeavour to reafon coolly on the fubject. Being refolved to advance nothing which I cannot prove, I think myfelf authorifed to defire the reader to deny nothing which he cannot confute: for I am not fo much afraid of thofe who may argue, as of fuch as withhold their affent to arguments to which they will neverthelefs make no objection.

It requires no very long or clofe attention to the means of bringing any kind of government to perfection, to perceive many obftacles and embarraffments, which arife lefs from the nature of the conftitution than from its external relations: fo that the care, which ought to be devoted to the domeftic policy of a ftate, is neceffarily beftowed on fecuring its dependency; more pains have been taken to enable it to refift other ftates, than to improve its own government. If the focial union were, as pretended, rather the effect of reafon than the paffions, how could men have been fo long in finding out that they have always done either too much or too little for their own happinefs; that individuals, being in a focial ftate with regard to their fellow countrymen, and in a ftate of nature with regard to the reft of the world, they have only prevented civil bloodfhed among particulars, to excite national wars, a thoufand times more general and deftructive; and that by attaching ourfelves to the intereft of particular perfons, we become enemies to our whole fpecies.

If there be any way to remove thefe fatal contradictions, it is perhaps by a confederative form of government only; which, connecting whole nations by the fame ties that unite individuals, may equally fubject both the one and the other to the authority of the laws. This mode of government appears, befides, preferable to every other, as it comprehends at once the advantages both of great ftates and fmall ones: it is refpectable abroad from its power; its laws are vigoroufly executed; and it is the only form which is adapted equally to reftrain the fubject, the magiftrate, and foreign ftates.

To behold, the perpetual diffentions, depredations, ufurpations, rebellions, wars, and murders, which are conftantly ravaging this refpectable abode of philofophers, this brilliant afylum of the arts and fciences; to reflect on the fublimity of our converfation and the meannefs of our proceedings, on the humanity of our maxims and the cruelty of our actions, on the meeknefs of our religion and the horror of our perfecutions, on a policy fo wife in theory and fo abfurd in practice, on the beneficence of fovereigns and the mifery of their people, on governments fo mild and wars fo deftructive; we are at a lofs to reconcile thefe ftrange contrarieties, while this pretended fraternity of European nations appears to be only a term of ridicule, ferving ironically to exprefs their reciprocal animofity.

And yet, in all this, things only take their natural courfe; every fociety deftitute of laws or magiftrates, every union formed or fupported by chance, muft neceffarily degenerate into quarels and diffentions upon the firft change of circumftances. The ancient union of the European nations hath rendered their interefts and privileges extremely complicated: they bear againft each other in fo many points, that the leaft agitation of any one puts the whole in motion. Their diffenfions are alfo by fo much the more fatal as their connections are intimate; while their frequent quarrels are almoft as unnatural and cruel as civil wars.

It muft be admitted, therefore, that the prefent relative ftate of the European powers is a ftate of war; and that the partial treaties fubfifting between fome of them, are rather temporary truces, than a ftate of peace; whether it be owing to thofe treaties having no other guarantees than the contracting parties, or that their refpective rights are never duly afcertained, and the pretenfions thence fubfifting among powers who acknowledge no fuperior infallibly prove the fource of new wars, as foon as different circumftances empower the pretenders to affert their claims.

To this it may be added, that the law of nations not being univerfally concerted and eftablifhed, but having no general principles, and inceffantly varying according to time and place, it is full of contradictory maxims, which can never be reconciled but by the right of the ftrongeft: fo that the judgment being without a fure guide and always biaffed in doubtful cafes by felf-intereft, war becomes fometimes inevitable even when both parties may be defirous of acting juftly. All that can be done, with the beft intentions, therefore, is to decide this kind of difputes by force of arms, or to palliate them by temporary treaties. But no fooner is occafion taken to revive the caufe of quarrel, than it takes a new form, and all is complication and confufion: the real grounds of the affair are not to be feen; ufurpation paffes for right, and weaknefs for injuftice; while, amidft the general diforder, every one finds himfelf infenfibly fo far difplaced, that, if it were poffible to recur to the real and primitive right, there would be few fovereigns in Europe who ought not to refund every thing they poffefs.

Another fource of war, lefs obvious though not lefs real, is, that things do not change their form in changing their nature; that ftates which are hereditary in fact, remain elective in appearance; that there are parliaments or national ftates in monarchies, and hereditary chiefs in republics; that one power really dependent not another, ftill preferves the appearance of liberty; that all the fubjects of the fame fovereign are not governed by the fame laws; that the order of fucceffion is different in different provinces of the fame ftate; in fine, that all governments naturally tend to a change, without there being a poffibility of preventing it. Such are the general and particular caufes which connect us for our ruin, and lead us to defcribe the charms of focial virtue with our hands conftantly ftained with human gore.

The caufes of an evil being once known, the remedy, if any fuch there be, is fufficiently indicated by the fame means. It is plain to every one, that fociety is formed by a coalition of interefts; that every diffention arifes from an oppofition of interefts; that, as a thoufand fortuitous events may change and modify both the one and the other, it is neceffary that every fociety fhould poffefs a coercive force, to direct and concert the movements of its feveral members, in order to give their common interefts and reciprocal engagements that folidity which they could not feparately acquire.

It would otherwife be a great miftake to fuppofe, that fuch a ftate of conftraint could ever change, merely from the nature of things, and without the affiftance of art. The prefent fyftem of Europe hath attained precifely that degree of folidity, which may keep it in a perpetual agitation, without ever effectually fubverting it: thus, if our misfortunes cannot be increafed, they are ftill lefs capable of being put an end to; becaufe no great revolution can now ever happen.

Let us inquire now in what manner this great work commenced by fortune, may be compleated by reafon; and how that free and voluntary fociety, which unites all the European ftates, affuming the force and folidity of a body truly political, and may be converted into a real confederacy. It is indubitable that fuch an eftablifhment, giving to this affociation its neceffary perfection, would remove its abufes, extend its advantages, and compel all parties to concur to the common good. But to this end it is neceffary that no confiderable power fhould refufe to enter into the affociation; that a judiciary tribunal fhould be eftablifhed, invefted with authority to inftitute fuch laws and regulations as all the members are to obey; that this tribunal be invefted with a coercive and coactive force to compel each particular ftate to fubmit to the refult, whether active or reftrictive, of the general deliberations; in fhort, that it be fixed and durable, to prevent the feveral members from withdrawing themfelves from it at pleafure, whenever they conceive their own particular interefts incompatible with the general. Thefe are the tokens by which it might be certainly known if the inftitution were prudent, ufeful, and impregnable. We come now to extend this fuppofition, in order to find out by analyfis what effects ought to refult from fuch a confederacy; what means are proper to eftablifh it, and what reafonable hope may be formed of its being carried into execution.

It is a cuftom among us, for a kind of general diets to affemble, from time to time, under the appellation of a Congrefs; to which envoys are folemnly deputed from all the ftates of Europe, to return back juft as they went; for they either meet to fay nothing, or to treat of public affairs as if they were private, to deliberate gravely whether the table fhould be round or fquare, whether there fhall be more or fewer doors to their affembly-room, whether a certain plenipotentiary fhould fit with his face or his back toward the window, whether another fhould advance a foot more or lefs on a vifit of ceremony, or on a thoufand other points of the like importance, ineffectually debated for thefe three centuries paft, and undoubtedly well worthy to employ the politicians of the prefent.

It is poffible that the members of fome one of thefe affemblies may be endowed with common fenfe; it is not even impoffible that they may be fincerely difpofed to the public good; and by the reafons hereafter to be deduced, it may be conceived, that, after having obviated many difficulties, they may have orders from their refpective fovereigns to fign the general confederacy; a fummary of which I fuppofe to be contained in the five following articles.

By the firft, the contracting fovereigns fhould eftablifh between themfelves a perpetual and irrevocable alliance; appointing plenipotentaries to hold a fixed and permanent diet, or congrefs, at a certain place; in which diet all the differences arifing between the contracting parties fhall be regulated and decided by way of arbitration.

By the fecond, the number of fovereigns fhould be fpecified whofe plenipotentiaries are to have votes in the Congrefs, with thofe who fhould be invited to accede to the treaty; alfo the order, time and manner, in which the office of Prefident is to pafs from one to another at equal intervals; and, laftly, the refpective quota of contributions, and the manner of raifing them, to fupply the general expences.

By the third, the confederacy fhould guarantee to each of its members the poffeffion and government of all the ftates it at prefent poffeffes, as well as the elective or hereditary fucceffion, as it may be eftablifhed by the fundamental laws of each country. In order alfo to cut off at once the fource of difputes inceffanly recurring among them, it fhould be agreed to make the actual poffeffion and the treaties laft concluded, the bafis of the mutual rights of the contracting powers; who are to renounce for ever and reciprocally all their prior pretenfions, except future fucceffions liable to be contefted, and other rights in reverfion, which are to be determined by arbitration at the diet, without the parties being ever permitted to do themfelves juftice by force, or to take up arms againft each other, under any pretence whatever.

By the fourth, it fhould be fpecified that every ally who fhall break the treaty, fhall be put under the ban of the empire, and profcribed as a common enemy; that is, if he refufes to comply with the decifions of the diet, makes preparations for war, negociates treaties repugnant to the confederacy, or takes up arms to refift or attack any of the allies. It fhould be farther agreed alfo, by the fame articles, that all the contracting parties fhall arm themfelves to act offenfively, jointly, and at the common expence, againft every ftate put under the ban of the empire, until fuch ftate fhall lay down its arms, and fubmit to execute the determination of the congrefs, repair the wrongs, reimburfe the expence, and even compenfate for making preparations for war contrary to treaty.

And, laftly, by the fifth article, the plenipotentiaries of the European confederacy fhould always be empowered to form, in the diet, fuch regulations as fhall be judged expedient to procure all poffible advantage to the whole of the European Republic, and its feveral members, in confequence of inftructions from their refpective courts, and having a majority of votes for the propofition of fuch regulations, and three-fourths five years after for their final determination. But that no alteration fhall ever be made in thefe five fundamental articles, without the unanimous confent of the whole confederacy.

(To be Continued.)

TO THE LATE

DOCTER MATHER OF BOSTON,

REV. SIR,

I RECEIVED your kind letter, with your excellent advice to the United States, which I read with great pleafure, and hope it will be duly regarded. Such writings, though they may be lightly paffed over by many readers, yet, if they make a deep impreffion on one active mind in a hundred, the effects may be confiderable.

Permit me to mention one little inftance which, though it relates to myfelf, will not be quite uninterefting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled, "Effays to do good," which I think was written by your father. It had been fo little regarded by a former poffeffor, that feveral leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me fuch a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life: for I have always fet a greater value on the character of a doer of good, than any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you feem to think, a ufeful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book.

You mention your being in your feventy-eight year. I am in my feventy-ninth. We are grown old together. It is now more than fixty years fince I left Bofton; but I remember well both your father and grandfather, having heard them both in the pulpit, and feen them in their houfes. The laft time I faw your father was in the beginning of 1724, when I vifited him after my firft trip to Pennfylvania: he received me in his library; and on my taking leave, fhewed me a fhorter way out of the houfe, through a narrow paffage, which was croffed by a beam over head. We were ftill talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he faid haftily, "Stoop Stoop!" I did not underftand him till I felt my head hit againft the beam. He was a man who never miffed any occafion of giving inftruction; and upon this he faid to me: "You are young, and have the world before you: ftoop as you go through it, and you will mifs many hard thumps." This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of ufe to me; and I often think of it, when I fee pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high.

I long much to fee again my native place; and once hoped to lay my bones there. I left it in 1723. I vifited it in 1733, 1743, 1753, and 1763; and in 1773 I was in England. In 1775 I had a fight of it, but could not enter, it being in poffeffion of the enemy. I did hope to have been there in 1783, but could not obtain my difmiffion from this employment here; and now I fear I fhall never have that happinefs. My beft wifhes however attend my dear country, "*esto perpetua.*" It is now bleffed with an excellent conftitution: may it laft for ever!

This powerful monarchy* continues its friendfhip for the United States. It is a friendfhip of the utmoft importance to our fecurity, and fhould be carefully cultivated. Britain has not yet well digefted the lofs of its dominions over us; and has ftill at times fome flattering hopes, of recovering it. Accidents may increafe thofe hopes, and encourage dangerous attempts. A breach between us and France would infallibly bring the Englifh again upon our backs: and yet we have fome wild beafts among our countrymen, who are endeavouring to weaken that connection.

Let us preferve our reputation, by performing our engagements; our credit by fulfilling our contracts; and our friends by gratitude and kindnefs; for we know not how foon we may again have occafion for all of them.

B. FRANKLIN.

Paffy, May 12, 1784.

* *France.*